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A Study on Sales Management of Tourism Purchases in Scenic Area: Taking Guangzhou Baiyun Mountain Scenic Area as an Example

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Abstract

How to promote the consumption of tourists has become the most prominent issue in the current tourism industry, which also brings great business opportunities for the tourism shopping market. However, there are still various problems in the tourism shopping in scenic areas. In this paper, the author takes the Guangzhou Baiyun Mountain Scenic Area as an example. After visiting, investigating and interviewing stall owners there, the author finds that there exist problems both in goods and scenic area management for the tourism shopping in the scenic areas. To address these two problems, it is suggested that the first step should be to improve the quality, variety, and art appreciation value of goods. The scenic area managers and government agencies should strengthen the management for the vicious competition among stall owners and for other sales orders, improve the sales status of tourism shopping and enhance sales effect in scenic areas.

Key words: Tourism economy; Scenic areas; Tourism purchases; Sales management

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INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s, scholars both at home and abroad have begun a study on tourism shopping (Yang, 2012), mainly

focusing on the perspective of tourists, tourism goods and tourism market. From wide view of the study on tourism shopping, it can be concluded that many scholars generally start with the establishment and thinking of the tourism shopping theory. For example, Shi Meiyu, a famous scholar in China, put forward the tourism shopping theory framework in 2004, namely, tourism goods - tourism shopping facilities - personnel^[2]. This makes up for the lack of study on the tourism shopping theory in China and provides a superb theoretical basis for the research on tourism shopping. Furthermore, Shi Meiyu made a profound study on Chinese tourism shopping by applying the “stimulus-response” of behavioral theory to analyze the tourists’ shopping behavior. She also adopted the empirical analysis method to conduct an investigation and research into the tourism shopping in South Korea, Japan and other countries. As a result, by using such methods, helpful experience is provided for the research and development of Chinese tourism shopping (Shi, 2004).

As the topic of tourism shopping is very extensive, most scholars incline to choose a certain scenic area or a certain region as the research subject and then accordingly put forward the solutions to improve tourism shopping level in such a region or a scenic area. For example, in his paper *A Probing into the Operation Mode of Tourism Souvenir in Scenic Areas* (2007), Ma Jinfu, a well-known scholar, presented a concept of creating a development model matching with characteristics of tourism souvenir through the analysis of the nature of tourism souvenirs and of the planning of scenic areas (Ma, 2007). Similarly, in his paper *Research on Status Quo and Countermeasures of Small Commodity Market in Scenic Areas in Sanya* (2014), Wu Zhihui concentrated on the research on the correlation between the development model of scenic areas and souvenir sales and their influence on each other (Wu, 2014). With respect to the research on tourism shopping based on sales, Huang Minxing, a respected scholar,

published the paper *Thoughts of Developing Production and Promoting the Sales of the Tourism Purchases* (2002). In this paper, she pointed out the significance and role of developing production and promoting the sales of the tourism purchases in facilitating the development of scenic areas, creating huge economic and social benefits for the development of tourism industry (Huang, 2002). Besides, Zhou Liang, another reputed scholar, published the paper *Thoughts of Developing Tourism Shopping at Scenic Areas* (2002), in which he shed light on the general situation and problems of developing tourism shopping in scenic areas in China (Zhou, 2002).

Among the studies on tourism shopping in scenic areas, most scholars first tend to center on the tourists by investigating and studying the individual characteristics of the tourists themselves, so as to identify factors that affect the tourism shopping and then to put forward the opinions and suggestions for the development of tourism shopping in scenic areas. There are also a few scholars who illustrate the role and significance of tourism sales in the development of tourism shopping. By setting about the study from the perspective of sales and then

investigating, studying and summarizing the sales condition of tourism purchases, the influence of tourism purchases in scenic areas on the tourism shopping can be spotted, the problems about the tourism shopping in scenic areas found and related suggestions offered. All this has a positive practical implication for the tourism shopping in scenic areas.

1. STATUS QUO OF TOURISM SHOPPING IN GUANGZHOU BAIYUN MOUNTAIN SCENIC AREA

Guangzhou Baiyun Mountain Scenic Area is one of national 5A-level scenic spots and national key scenic spots. Fifteen different stores in this Scenic Area were investigated and interviewed. As a result, it was found that different types of shops had different sizes and different types of goods. These goods were ranging from low-end ones to high-end ones, representing the consumption levels of different tourists. The Table 1

below lists the basic overview of the visited stores.

Table 1
Statistics Table of Goods Sold by Stalls in Guangzhou Baiyun Mountain Scenic Area

Type of stores	Main goods	Price range	The investigated numbers	Features
Toys for children	Pinwheels, kites and bubble balls	Ten to fifty yuan	4	Big in quantity and poor in quality
Jades	Necklaces and bracelets	More than 500 yuan	2	With the stones being the raw materials, beautiful and high-grade
Gold & silver jewellery	All sorts of ornaments	More than one thousand yuan	2	Expensive and similar in the market
Low-end accessories	Short bracelets and earrings	Twenty to two hundred yuan	3	Diversified in kinds and low in price
Animal specimens souvenirs	Butterfly specimens handicrafts	Fifty to two thousand yuan	1	With the real butterflies as specimens and distinctive
Portraits	Pictures and portraits	More than three hundred yuan	1	High artistry, and with portraits being drawn on the spot
Calligraphy and painting	All kinds of calligraphy and paintings	More than five hundred yuan	1	High artistry and huge potential for collection
Steel wire crafts	Grotesque handicrafts	Three hundred to three hundred and fifty yuan	1	Grotesque and unique

According to the table above, there are considerable kinds of stores for tourism purchases in Guangzhou Baiyun Mountain Scenic Area, including toys stores, accessory stores, gold & silver jewellery stores, handicrafts souvenir stores, portrait stores as well as calligraphy and painting stores. In short, the Scenic Area has all kinds of shopping stores, providing a wide range of choices for tourists. Therefore, this can enable the tourists feel free to purchase what they like, which will boost the development of tourism economy of the Scenic Area at the same time.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE INVESTIGATION RESULTS

2.1 Analysis of the Status Quo of Tourism Shopping in Baiyun Mountain Scenic Area

2.1.1 The Overall Consumption Status Quo of Tourism Purchases

The tourists in Baiyun Mountain Scenic Area are diversified, so are their needs for the goods. There is a great distinction among the tourists with different

consumption levels. However, most tourists come to the Scenic Area for one-day trip or half-day trip. As they are familiar with the Scenic Area, the souvenirs can hardly arise their interest, let alone the high-end ornaments. Obviously, the overall consumption level of the tourists in the Scenic Area are relatively low. Nevertheless, some rare handicrafts enjoy a great popularity among local and foreign tourists. Therefore, the majority of tourism purchases in the Scenic Area are handicrafts, such as butterfly specimens, calligraphy and painting and portraits. On the contrary, fewer tourists buy the souvenirs of the Scenic Area.

This suggests that the consumption of tourism purchases in the scenic areas are largely influenced by their hobbies. As a result, it is essential that stores in the scenic areas should be set by catering to the shopping psychology of tourists including the psychological characteristics of seeking beauty and interest proposed by Nie Guihong in his book (2003). If a tourist's consumption concept mainly depends on his or her hobbies, it is prone to causing irrational consumption behavior.

Irrational consumption mainly refers to the tourists' unnecessary consumption or their consumption behavior resulting in a waste. According to the hint given by the owners of small toy stores who receive the author's interview, the sales volume of small toy stores are unstable, mainly affected by the tourists of different types. For the tourists with children, the toys are in great demand. However, this may lead to the occurrence of another phenomenon that many toys may be discarded by the small kids once they lose their interest. The deserted toys can be found everywhere in the scenic areas every day. This also belongs to the irrational consumption of tourists, which not only causes a waste of goods, but also damages the environment (Wang, 2008).

The shopping level of tourists in Baiyun Mountain Scenic Area vary greatly. The main reasons lie in the repetition of stores and less attractive goods. In particular, there are fewer goods which can reflect the specialty of the Scenic Area. However, the irrational consumption caused by individuals propels the shopping levels of the Scenic Area. Meanwhile, it also poses enormous pressure on the environment of the Scenic Area.

2.1.2 The Management Status Quo of the Tourism Shopping Market in the Scenic Area

A. The tourism purchases in the Scenic Area is less practical

It has been mentioned that the tourists are only interested in some crafts, and sometimes they even discard the goods directly after the consumption. This indirectly shows that there is a less practicality for the goods in the Scenic Area. Actually, this is a common problem existing in many scenic areas in China. Consequently, there are lots of goods that attract more bystanders and fewer buyers (Hu & Gu, 2014).

B. The stores in the Scenic Area are distributed in a chaotic way, not closely associated with the tourist attractions.

Walking along the trail of Baiyun Mountain, we can see the distribution of various stores is not regular. Most of them are distributed around some of the attractions, especially concentrated in the Square at the peak. There is not even a single store beside some newly developed attractions, such as the recently built glass skywalk. This implies that Baiyun Mountain Scenic Area has a confused and non-standardized management for the stores.

The stores in the Scenic Area are mainly privately-operated. The number of staff in three quarters of the stores is ranging from 2 to 3. They are family stores with small size, thus causing the difficulty for the unified management of the market. Besides, the quality of goods sold by these stores is poor in quality. In addition, there is a lack of large shopping centers in the Scenic Area. The goods of small stores are mainly supplied by the local commodity wholesale market in Guangzhou, such as shisanhang, Haizhu Square wholesale city and Zhuangyuanfang, where the good and bad commodities are intermingled. As there are quality problems for these goods, it is difficult for the government to perform unified management.

2.2 Analysis of Sales of Tourism Purchases at the Stalls in the Scenic Area

2.2.1 Change Course of Sales of Tourism Purchases

According to the interview of the stall owners, the sales of stalls in the Scenic Area has undergone some changes. To be specific, since 2010 when the Baiyun Mountain Scenic Area was rated as the national 5A-level scenic spot, their sales volumes have been greatly influenced.

Before 2010, it can be said that the sales of each stall is rising perpendicularly. The stores were allowed to open in accordance with the bidding. At that time, the Scenic Area was only an ordinary one, so the threshold was relatively low and store costs were relatively low, too. Besides, most of the goods were from the local wholesale market in Guangzhou, with diverse goods and low cost. Therefore, the profit of each kind of goods in many small stores can amount to 200%. It can be said that the then sales volume reaches the summit.

From 2010, things started to change. As the Scenic Area was upgraded, many store owners aspire to open more stores in the Scenic Area. However, as the threshold becomes higher, these owners need to invest a big sum of money in one more store. In addition, the increase of stores indicates the greater competition where lots of stores sell the same goods. As a result, the sales volume of the existing stores are greatly affected. However, at the same time, new stores bring plenty of new types of goods. There are more handicrafts stores, such as butterfly specimens stores and steel wire crafts stores, which attract more tourists through the novel goods. Therefore,

the sales volume of these new stores are significant. By contrast, the unchanging old stores meet their Waterloo in sales volume. Hence, how to improve sales volume and deal with competition has become an imminent challenge for many stores in the Scenic Area.

2.2.2 Analysis of Sales Competition of Tourism Purchases

A. Analysis of competition among the stores of same kind

There are many similar stores in the Baiyun Mountain Scenic Area, with similar type of goods and similar size. Among 15 stores interviewed, there are four toy stores that sell the same kind of toys. As the sales of toys are dismal, these toy stores owner open their snack bars next to their stores to increase the income. Superficially, they seem to ignore their proper business. However, it reveals that the fierce competition among stores of the same kind is self-evident.

B. Analysis of competition between new stores and old stores

In recent years there have been more new stores in Baiyun Mountain Scenic Area. With novel and diverse types of goods, sales volume of these new stores are warranted to some degree, which poses a tremendous pressure on old stores. A large number of old stores sell invariable goods. Even though they sometimes make some changes, the goods are still featureless. Therefore, the income of these old stores are mainly from their regular customers. Now, realizing their weakness, many old stores owners are racing to come up with new ideas to make their goods more attractive to draw more attention of new tourists (Hu & Gu, 2014).

2.2.3 Analysis of Sales Behavior of Tourism Purchases

The competition among the stores are partly caused by the policy of the Scenic Area managers. As its management becomes more and more perfect, the Scenic Area raises more requirements for the quality of the goods of various stores. As a result, while improving the quality of the goods, the purchasing costs becomes higher. Besides, the Scenic Area managers also increase the requirements for the entry of new stores, with the rise of bidding threshold being a typical example. This move is conducive to selecting the reliable stores for the Scenic Area. However, this may make the store owners to push up prices to increase their revenue, thus causing malicious competition in the prices of goods in the Scenic Area and ultimately making the tourists being the victims. To prevent this from happening, the government agencies should play its leading role. In fact, many stores are regularly subject to the quality management and price control of local Administration for Industry and Commerce every year. In addition, various stalls are also under certain constraints. However, due to the lack of strict management, there are still some stores participating in vicious competition. This demonstrates that the government's management task still has a long way to go.

3. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

3.1 Common Problems of Sales of Tourism Purchases in Baiyun Mountain Scenic Area

3.1.1 Vicious Competition of Stores in the scenic area

The stores in the Scenic Area have small sizes, unreasonable structure of goods supply, poor-quality and featureless goods. As there are a great number of small-size stores, the competition among them is intense, which is prone to causing vicious competition. In addition, since the stores are not able to come up with novel ideas to increase the charm and individuality of their goods, their sales volume is on a decrease year by year.

3.1.2 Shortage of Management of the Scenic Area Managers and the Government Agencies

The management of the Scenic Area is inadequate and imperfect, resulting in chaotic and unreasonable distribution of stores that have less association and interaction with the tourist attractions. Owing to the government's relaxed management for the operation of stores in the Scenic Area and the connivance in price gouging, the competition among the stores can not be contained in a proper way.

3.2 Suggestions

3.2.1 Countermeasures for the Stall Owners

It is crucial to improve the quality of goods, enrich the categories of commodities and make the goods more distinctive. In particular, for the old stores, it is imperative to alter their operation way and sell the featured goods of their own by simulating and learning the new stores. The investigation shows that many tourists have an enormous interest in the featured handicrafts. Therefore, many stores owners should pay more attention to these distinctive goods, such as butterfly specimens and insect specimens. They can utilize these good-quality goods to attract more tourists.

Stores can cooperate with one another. For example, the small stores of the same kind can be merged to build large shopping malls, which are in shortage in the Scenic Area according to the investigation. As a result, carrying out cooperation among the competitive stores can solve messy distribution of stores and also avoid vicious competition among stores.

Personalized shopping services should be designed and provided. Shopping is a kind of traveling activity. For tourists, traveling is a kind of enjoyment, so is the shopping. During the entire shopping trip, they not only hope to take delight in appreciating novelty and kinds of goods of stores, but also aspire to enjoy the best service offered by the stores. Therefore, the stall owners can try their best to provide extraordinary service for the customers. For example, they can take the initiative to tell the customers the history, role and other aspects of their goods. By doing so, the tourists can enjoy the shopping,

learn from the shopping and savor the joy of shopping.

3.2.2 Suggestions for the Scenic Area Managers and Government Agencies

Arrangements should be made for the reasonable distribution of the stores to have closer association with the tourist attractions, thus facilitating the unified management. Stores should have been a part of the Scenic Area and should associate and interact with tourist attractions. It is necessary to arrange a proper number of stores next to the important tourist attractions and rest areas for tourists, which will greatly promote tourism shopping.

Efforts should be made to provide tourists with opportunities for experiential shopping and with the recreational facilities. The pleasure created by experiential shopping may exert a great influence on the subsequent shopping experience and mentality of tourists. For example, if the environment of the Scenic Area is very clean and the tourist attractions are funny and fascinating, the tourists' shopping desire will increase and they will have strong interest in visiting the stores. On the contrary, if the tourists find that there are lots of litters, poor air as well as rude staff in the Scenic Area, their shopping desire will be weakened obviously. Therefore, enabling the tourists to have a good mood in sightseeing the Scenic Area is conducive to increasing their shopping desire.

The appraisal and supervision of the goods quality should be intensified to strive to resist the entry of stores with low-quality goods into the Scenic Area. This not only guarantees the practicality and quality of goods, but also improves the overall quality of the Scenic Area. As a matter of fact, the Scenic Area should be developed in an all-round way. Only by enhancing the specialty of tourist attractions and improving the quality of goods can the tourists with much more spending power be attracted to visit the Scenic Area and can the stores with high-end and durable goods be attracted to enter the Scenic Area. As a result, a high-quality and sound cycle can be

formed, which will fully improve shopping level of the Scenic Area and promote the all-round development of the Scenic Area.

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